

THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Twenty-Fifth Meeting, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), 24 February - 3 March 1981

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT TO IRRIGATION WATER MANAGEMENT
RESEARCH AND TRAINING

PROGRESS REPORT - FEBRUARY 1981

(Agenda Item 8)

Proposed objectives of the discussion

TAC's proposal for the creation of an International Institute for Research and Training on Irrigation Water Management was presented to the CGIAR at its Manila meeting on 30-31 October 1980. The CGIAR did not support TAC's proposal in its present formulation, instead, it suggested that TAC convene a small group or task force to study and recommend appropriate alternative institutional models for international support of water management. Several CGIAR members expressed interest in being associated with the formulation of a more appropriate proposal.

Meanwhile, in further preliminary consultations, it was suggested that the task force, in order to be effective, should be assisted by a study team of some three consultants.

In deciding upon a further course of action, TAC may consider the merits of forming the proposed task force and study team, to formulate an appropriate proposal for consideration by the Committee.

Should TAC decide to establish the task force and the study team, possible members for both should be considered, and terms of reference and a schedule of proceedings should be agreed upon.

TAC SECRETARIAT

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

January 1981

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT TO IRRIGATION WATER MANAGEMENT
RESEARCH AND TRAINING

PROGRESS REPORT - FEBRUARY 1981

(1) CGIAR Response to TAC's Proposal for the Creation of an International Institute for Research and Training on Irrigation Water Management

1. At the CGIAR meeting in Manila on 30-31 October 1980, the Chairman of TAC presented the Committee's proposal for the creation of an International Institute for Research and Training on Irrigation Water Management ^{1/}. The proposal still needed further refinement. However, in presenting a draft proposal to the Group, TAC wished to give advance notice to the CGIAR as a statement of intent, that a comprehensive proposal would be submitted for its consideration. Before finalizing it, TAC first wished to gauge the reaction and interest of the Group as to its most appropriate formulation, and also to invite suggestions from the Group to further sharpen the proposal.

2. In the discussion held at Manila there was no dissent from the very high priority of effective water management and the need for TAC to further pursue its examination of the subject. Questions were raised, however, about the institutional mechanism proposed by TAC and the need for a CGIAR involvement in this field. Some CGIAR members stressed that the problems of irrigation water management are mainly location-specific. They were reluctant therefore, to support a new CGIAR initiative, especially since several IARCs and other institutions are already involved in this field. Certainly, they recognized the need for increased efforts, but felt that this should be met by strengthening existing national and international activities, including those of the IARCs. Other members, while recognizing the role of ongoing programmes and the need for their reinforcement, suggested that TAC convene a small group or task force to study and make recommendations on appropriate alternative institutional models for international support to research and training in irrigation water management and operation, taking into account these ongoing activities. Another suggestion concerned the testing of various hypotheses, including the TAC proposal, on a pilot scale at national level.

3. Several CGIAR members have expressed their interest in being associated with further discussions and the formulation of a more appropriate proposal, particularly the World Bank, IFAD, IADB, ADB, FAO, Australia, Canada, Ford Foundation, France, Italy and the Netherlands.

(2) Follow-up by the TAC Secretariat in Preparation for the Meeting of TAC

4. Since the Manila meeting, preliminary consultations were held on the ways and means by which TAC may wish to convene this task force. It

was suggested that, in order to be effective, the task force should be assisted by a study team of some three consultants, the task force acting as a kind of steering committee for the study team.

5. Meanwhile, in anticipation of TAC's discussion on the subject, the Secretariat sought some additional information which may be helpful to the Committee. It invited Centre Directors 1/ to provide information regarding the following points:

- (i) a brief statement of the Centre's past and present activities if any, in the field of water management;
- (ii) the aspects of water management research and training, which the Centre in addition to its present activities, considers important to be undertaken (by the Centre or by any other organization), taking into account the proposal of TAC;
- (iii) names of possible candidates which TAC may wish to consider for participation in the task force and in the study team.

6. Those CGIAR members who had expressed interest to be further associated with activities regarding the formulation of a more appropriate proposal, were also approached. In addition to providing names of potential members of the task force and consultants for the study team, they have been invited to provide the Secretariat with information regarding:

- (i) confirmation of their interest, as a member of the CGIAR, to be associated with the further pursuance of an appropriate proposal for international support of water management research and training;
- (ii) if so, which existing institutions involved in water management research and training would, in their opinion, deserve consideration in the elaboration of alternative models;
- (iii) further guidance as to the most appropriate institutional model for the implementation of an international research and training effort in water management.

7. The response from the Centres and from the CGIAR members were due in early February 1981. The Secretariat will report briefly on their replies at the meeting.

(3) Proposed Formation of a Task Force and Study Team

8. Following the suggestions which emerged during and after the discussion in the CGIAR meeting, TAC may wish to consider the merits of forming a task force and study team to assist the Committee in preparing a more appropriate proposal on water management research and training and, if opportune to discuss available candidates for the task force and the study team at its present meeting and to decide on the composition of both.

1/ except of IBPGR and ILRAD

9. Under this proposal, first the task force would meet with the consultants of the study team and give them guidance in considering alternative institutional models for international support of water management research and training, including those which may have been suggested by the IARCs and by interested CGIAR members. Appropriate models would then be further examined by the study team, who would report on their feasibility, so as to enable the task force to make recommendations for TAC's consideration at its 26th meeting in June 1981. A proposed schedule of proceedings is attached in Annex I as an illustration of a possible sequence of events, it being understood that TAC may wish to follow a different course.

10. As a variant of the above, it has been suggested that the task of the consultants of the study team should not be confined to a desk study only, but should include field visits to assess the capability and the effectiveness of relevant ongoing programmes and existing institutions working in this field, as well as their interest and potential role in an international initiative. Although a survey has been carried out by IDRC consultants in this field, some may consider that it dealt largely with the problems and priorities in the perspective of the possible establishment of one international centre, whereas the study team may now be requested to assess the feasibility of other institutional models. Should TAC support these additional functions of the study team, then naturally the consultants' assignments would be for a period of several months; this may however create problems for their recruitment.

11. Alternatively, the elaboration of a proposal may be pursued under other auspices, e.g. a consortium of technical and financial assistance agencies involved in irrigation development.

12. The members of the task force would be expected to act in their personal capacity and not as representatives of their institution or member country. One may assume that TAC would select them on the basis of their broad experience in irrigated agriculture in developing countries, while striking a balance between the institutions and regions from which they would be drawn. It is hoped that the cost of their participation in the task force meetings will be met by the CGIAR members which recommended their participation. The three consultants of the study team would be expected to be more specialized in the planning, management and operation of irrigation systems, and the related aspects of water management research and training; TAC would seek funds for their consultation.

(4) Draft Terms of Reference of Task Force

13. The task force, convened by and responsible to TAC, assisted by a study team of consultants, will undertake:

- (i) to consider alternative institutional models for international support of water management research and training;

- (ii) to provide guidance to the study team of consultants regarding further examination of the most appropriate institutional models, with special reference to governance, management, mode of operation, funding, and to the structure and content of the research and training programmes;
- (iii) to consider the study team's draft report and to guide the consultants in the preparation of the final report containing findings, conclusions and recommendations for consideration by TAC.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF PROCEEDINGS 1/

A schedule of proceedings for the task force and the study team is proposed, as follows:

27-29 April 1981	First meeting of the task force with the three consultants of the study team to consider alternative institutional models for international support of water management research and training, and briefing of the consultants.
30 April-19 May 1981	Study team to further examine appropriate alternative models and to prepare their draft report.
20-22 May 1981	Second meeting of the task force with the study team to discuss their draft report and guide the consultants in the preparation of their final report.
25-29 May 1981	Study team to finalize the report.
... June 1981	Presentation of the report to TAC and formulation of TAC recommendations.
... November 1981	Consideration by the CGIAR of TAC findings and recommendations.

1/ This schedule is illustrative of the possible sequence of events which could be examined by TAC. Other alternatives have also been proposed in paragraphs 10 and 11. The place of venue of the task force meetings, as well as the place of work of the study team would have to be determined.

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